

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
14 April 2005 (14.04.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
WO 2005/033024 A1

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: C02F 11/12 (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB2004/004181

(22) International Filing Date: 1 October 2004 (01.10.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data: 0323068.7 1 October 2003 (01.10.2003) GB

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(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Declaration under Rule 4.17:

— as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii)) for all designations

Published:

— with international search report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

WO 2005/033024 A1

(54) Title: DEWATERING TREATMENT SYSTEM AND METHOD

(57) Abstract: An apparatus and method for reducing the liquid content of a particulate/liquid dispersion, such as a sewage sludge or mine tailings, are described. The apparatus comprises containment means to contain the material, and means to apply pressure to the contained material therein, the containment means being partly defined by a first filtration membrane permeable to the liquid but impermeable to at least some and more preferably substantially all of the solids contained within the material, in particular configured as a continuous belt press. The filtration membrane comprises a textile or other synthetic material in intimate association with a conducting element so as to constitute where so associated a first electrode. A second sheet material, preferably also a filtration membrane, is similarly associated with a conducting element so as to constitute a second electrode to allow application of a potential difference across the material and drive the dewatering process electrokinetically. Preferably, the apparatus is a belt filter press, and includes means to apply a variable and intermittent voltage to, and insulate from each other, two electrodes configured as continuously moving belts.